

Message Text

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TO USIA WASHDC

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E.O. 11652: N/A

SUBJECT: INTERNATIONAL NEWS AGENCY

1. INDIA'S CONSOLIDATED NEWS SERVICE, SAMACHAR, CARRIED A STORY ON THE WIRE LATE THURSDAY QUOTING UNION MINISTER FOR INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING SHUKLA TO THE EFFECT THAT SAMACHAR WOULD START TRANSMITTING NEWS TO VARIOUS PARTS OF THE WORLD IN FRENCH, ARABIC AND SPANISH WITHIN TWO MONTHS.

2. ON THE SUBJECT OF THE NON-ALIGNED NEWS POOL, SHUKLA REPORTEDLY SAID SAMACHAR IS NOW EXCHANGING NEWS WITH 22 NATIONS ON A BILATERAL BASIS AND HE REITERATED EARLIER REPORTS THAT SAMACHAR WOULD SHORTLY POST TWENTY MORE CORRESPONDENTS OVERSEAS.

3. AND ON THE MATTER OF PRESS CENSORSHIP, SAMACHAR QUOTES THE MINISTER AS STATING: "THERE IS HARDLY ANY RESTRICTION," ADDTING THAT HE SAID THAT AS TO WHATEVER RESTRICTIONS THERE WERE, THE NEWSPAPERS WERE PRACTICING SELF-CENSORSHIP AND ONLY IN VERY RARE CASES DID THE GOVERNMENT HAVE TO INTERVENE.GILDNER

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